(b) if so, whether any investigation has been made by Government; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE-PATIL): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Group Insurance Scheme for Rural Sector

564. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal under active consideration of Government to start a group insurance scheme for the rural sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof and by when it is expected to be initiated;

(c) how far the poor shall be benefited and the expenditure expected to be incurred thereon, State-wise, annually; and

(d) the total number of Self-Helf Groups (SHGs) linked with Banks on date and amount advanced to SHGs, State-wise and bank-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE-PATIL): (a) and (b) The insurance companies / corporation have a number of group insurance schemes catering to the needs of rural population. Some of the important schemes are — Janashree Bima Yojana and Krishi Shramik Samajik Suraksha Yojana. Apart from these, several customized policies have been offered by insurance companies to State Governments and other groups of individuals. No new scheme is proposed to be taken up by the Government during the current year.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) The information is being collected and shall be laid on the Table of the House.

Enhancement of Excise Duty on Petroleum Products

†565. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are considering to enhance excise duty on petroleum products;

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, whether Government would reconsider it; and

(c) if so, by when, and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Does not arise in view of the reply to part (a) above.

Beneficial Schemes under National Savings

566. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to extend any concession of Income-Tax Provisions for the deposits of National Savings;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government propose to introduce any new beneficial schemes to attract the deposits under National Savings Scheme;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether Government propose to increase the rate of interest admissible to the deposits under National Savings Scheme; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) and (b) No, Sir. Savings instruments like the National Savings Certificate VIIIth issue, National Savings Scheme, 1992 and Public Provident Fund already get the benefit of tax rebate under section 88 of the Income Tax Act on initial investment and deduction from gross total income under section 80-L of the Income Tax Act on accrued interest as per specified limits. Post Office Time Deposit, Recurring Deposit and Monthly Income Schemes are also eligible for deduction from gross total income under section 80-L of the Income Tax Act on accrued interest as per specified limits.

(c) and (d) At present, no new scheme is proposed to be introduced under small savings schemes.

(e) and (f) At present there is no such proposal under consideration of the government.